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Message Text

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PAGE 01 FREETO 01891 051705Z

43
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /007 W
---------- 085566
O 051629Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1674

UNCLAS FREETOWN 1891

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AFSP
SUBJECT: TDY CONSULAR ASSISTANCE

REF: A. FREETOWN 1631 B. STATE 169155 C. FREETOWN 1733 D. STATE 176340

FOR KRYZA (AF/EX) FROM AMBASSADOR

1. I AM FRANKLY AMAZED THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE NOTHING THE DEPARTMENT CAN DO TO PROVIDE THIS EMBASSY WITH TEMPORARY CONSULAR ASSISTANCE UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF MY NEW JUNIOR OFFICER AT THE END OF AUGUST. I AM NOW WITHIN THREE DAYS OF HAVING TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING DECISION: WHETHER TO CLOSE DOWN OUR VISA OPERATION FOR ALL EXCEPT DIPLOMATIC, OFFICIAL OR OTHER APPLICANTS WELL KNOWN TO US, OR ASSIGN MY DCM TO VIRTUALLY FULL-TIME VISA INTERVIEWING FOR THE LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENT APPLICANTS, MANY HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE, WHO BESEIGE US DAILY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. FORMER WOULD BE PR DISASTER. RE LATTER, DCM IS ALREADY HAVING TO SPEND MINIMUM OF THREE HOURS A DAY, MORE FREQUENTLY FOUR OR FIVE, ON CONSULAR AFFAIRS TO BACKSTOP SUMMER INTERN, SIGN VISAS AND PASSPORTS, ACCOUNT FOR CONSULAR FEES, HANDLE PROTECTION CASES, ETC. WHEN SUMMER INTERN LEAVES THIS FRIDAY, DCM WILL HAVE TO TAKE ON FULL WORKLOAD AT BUSIEST CONSULAR TIME OF YEAR AND LET GO VIRTUALLY ALL HIS SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC REPORTING, AID MATTERS, AND GENERAL SUPERVISION OF MISSION OPERATIONS, OR WE CLOSE DOWN ON VISAS.
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PAGE 02 FREETO 01891 051705Z

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

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2. IT SEEMS TO ME KAFKA-ESQUE THAT AT ONE OF THE SMALLEST EMBASSIES IN THE SERVICE (AT THIS POINT THREE OFFICERS, MYSELF INCLUDED, OUT OF FOUR AUTHORIZED), VISA WORK WILL HAVE TO BE HANDLED FOR EXTENDED PERIOD BY AN FSO-3, THUS MAKING HIM PROBABLY THE HIGHEST PAID FULL-TIME VISA INTERVIEWING OFFICER IN THE SERVICE. EVEN IN MANILA, ONE OF THE GREAT VISA MILLS, FULL-TIME INTERVIEWING IS NOT HANDLED, I UNDERSTAND, BY ANYONE HIGHER THAN AN FSO-5. I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT MY DCM'S TIME AND SALARY ARE BEST DEVOTED TO SCREENING OUT BONA FIDE STUDENT APPLICANTS TO THE EXCLUSION OF FOLLOWING FAST BREAKING POLITICAL SCENE OR ASSISTING ME IN MAKING IMPORTANT UP-COMING PROGRAM DIRECTION DECISIONS. UNPAID OVERTIME IS NO ANSWER, SINCE WE ARE ALREADY ON EFFECTIVE 60-70 HOUR WEEKS.

3. ISN'T THERE ANYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE? AREN'T THERE AT LEAST SOME STILL UNASSIGNED OFFICERS WITH CONSULAR EXPERIENCE OUT OF CAMBODIA OR VIETNAM WHO COULD BE SENT FOR THREE WEEKS?
SAMUELS

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NNN

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